

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 OMB-01

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FM AMEOBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3784

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NOUAKCHOTT 0940

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR MR SG

SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN-SENEGAL BORDER DISPUTE AND OMVS UNITY

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 0909

1. USUEP WELL INFORMED FRENCH DIPLOMAT TOLD US REASON FOR PRESIDENT TRAORE'S SURPRISE SIX-HOUR VISIT TO NOUAKCHOTT MAY 12 INCLUDED MALIAN MEDIATPFNEFXRT OVER MAURITANIAN-SENEGAL BORDERDISPUTE. DIPLOMAT SAID I'ISLEDE TODD, NEAR MOUTH OF SENEGAL RIVER, CAN BE CLAIMED BY OAU RITANIA OR SENEGAL DEPENDING UPON LOAION ON PRINCIPAL CHANNEL WHICH CHANGES AS RIVER RISES. TRAORE, FRENCH DIPLOMAT SPECULATED, IS CONCERNED LEST THIS BORDER DISPUTE DISRUPT OMVS UNITY WITH CONSEQUENT DELAY ON DEVELOPMENT OF SENEGAL RIVER AND, MORE PARTICULARLY, ITS CENTER-PIECE MANATALI DAM PROJECT IN MALI.

2. COMMENT: PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH WAS ACTIVE PROMOTER OF SENEGAL RIVER DEVELOPMENT AS PRESIDENT OF OMVS. HIS TERM ENDED IN JULY 1974 AFTER UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO OBTAIN "DEFINITIVE" FINANCIAL FORMULA AT OMVS-DONOR CONFERENCE IN NOUAKCHOTT. IN SEPTEMBER 1974, OULD DADDAH TRAVELLED TO PEKING FOR EXPRESSED PURPOSE OF OBTAINING

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CHINESE COMMITMENT TO BUILD MANATALI DAM. WHEN HE RETURNED,

HOWEVER, HE SAID NOTHING ABOUT OMVS OR MANATALI BUT DID
ANNOUNCE PRC PLEDGE TO BUILD DEEP WATER PORT FOR NOUAKCHOTT.
SENEGAL RIVER DEVELOPMENT HAS NOT SUBSEQUENTLY FIGURED AS
PRINCIPAL SUBJECT OF GIRM INTERES. THIS MAY BE NATURAL
RESULT OF OMVS PRESIDENCY PASSING TO SENEGAL AND GIRM
PREOCCUPATIONWITH ITS TWO MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:
NEM ROAD AND NTUAKCHOTT PORT. ANY LESSENING OF GIRM
COMMITMENT TO OMVS OR SQUABBLING AMONG ITS MMBERS WOULD
NATURALLY BE OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO PRESIDENT TRAORE AD
WORTHY OF HIS PERSONAL INTERVENTION.HANDYSIDE

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